BULGARIA-PAST & PRESENT

•217
658

Another cultural Institution which deserves mentioning is the National Library at Sofia which contains a magnificent collection of some 4,000 old Bulgarian monuscripts dating as far back as the 13th century, some 10,000 Arabian and Turkish manuscripts, containing a vast amount of material relative to the history of the Balkan peninsula, about 100,000 historical documents, letters, etc. The Library possesses some 200,000 volumes in Bulgarian, being copies of all books which have been published in Bulgaria, as well as a certain number of foreign works. The present premises are altogether too exiguous to lodge the collections of books and provide reading accomodation for the ever-pressing throng of students and visitors. The writer, who often visited the library and wishes to ackowledge the courtesy he has always met from its much harassed officials, was strongly impressed by the strenuous efforts visitors to the library used to make and the patience and perseverance they displayed in order to secure access to its very limited reading room. It is very much to be regretted that neither the Carnegie nor Rockfeller Foundations, which have endowed so many public libraries, which often remain whole days without visitors, should not have rendered some materiel assistance to this particular library which is perpetually overcrowded. It is a great pity also that the Bulgarian Government has not been able to provide some resources wherewith to remédy, at least partially, to this lack of accomodation, which hampers the work of all visitors to the library. There are national libraries at Plovdiv, Tirnovo and Shumen, and all municipalities of large towns have well organised public libraries, of which at least 200 function regularly throughout Bulgaria. Much has been done to organise public reading rooms in villages and in April 1934 it was reported that some 2,356 such public reading rooms had already been opened, of which 1243 were organised in one syndicate with a total membership of 103,000.

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Owing to the lack of funds, the activities of these reading rooms, of which 1,208 are in rural districts, were rather circumscribed, their stock of books was reported to be 847,426, and the books purchased during the year numbered only 127,757.

The new educational reforms comtemplate the suppression of about two thirds of the existing colleges so as to impede access to the higher training establishments and the University. The colleges will be replaced by practical schools, after the German „real schule", a system which according to Prof. Yorga has concurred in dehumanising the youth of Germany. Only those students who posses exceptional endowments will be allowed to complete their college training and qualify for a University education.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ESSAY

All who have come in close touch with the Bulgarian people have been impressed by such characteristic traits as their diligence, assiduousness, their fondness of labour and their persevering and indefatigable devotion to the land which they till. Frugal and abstemious in the extreme, the Bulgarian peasant provides for his modest needs from the produce of his farm. This form of life which tends to make him self-sufficing and independent of his neighhours has rendered him self-reliant and self-centred to an extreme degree and has militated strongly against the development of social virtues in him. He is capable of submitting to extreme privations, he scoffs at physical suffering, and is almost insensible to pain. He detests affectation and bragging, and takes pride only in collective achievements, national or military. In this he displays a striking similarity to the Japanese whom he